



MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND INSURANCE

TENNESSEE FIRE SERVICE AND CODES ENFORCEMENT ACADEMY

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STATE FACILITY CO-HOSTS LARGEST FIREFIGHTER TRAINING EVENT

Bell Buckle, TN.- More than 600 firefighters from across the state traveled to the Great Smoky Mountains March 4-5 to attend a weekend of intense firefighter training.

The "2006 Smoky Mountain Weekend" is co-sponsored by the Tennessee Fire Service and Codes Enforcement Academy, the Sevier County Fire Chief's Association and the Sevier County Training Officers Association. Additional support is provided by the Sevierville Fire Department.

This event is very well known among the firefighter community as being the largest single firefighter training event and it is open to firefighters from all across Tennessee. The training weekend was held at the Sevier County High School and auxiliary locations, in Sevierville, Tennessee.

Students had the option of participating in a wide range of educational training courses that included incident command, chief officer, emergency response to terrorism, incident response to terrorist bombings, and recognizing and identifying hazardous materials.

"The Tennessee Fire Service and Codes Enforcement Academy is proud to once again be a part of such a vital training event", states Roger Hawks, Executive Director. "This year's training event has an increased emphasis on firefighter safety which is designed to reduce the number of firefighter Line of Duty Deaths and injuries."

Almost 75% of the states firefighters are volunteers who often work a daily job during the week. Holding the training on a weekend allows more volunteer firefighters to receive training that they desperately need, but otherwise would not be able to obtain. These participants are then able to take their gained experience back to their co-workers in their community.

"With the increased risk and hazards firefighters now deal with, from structural collapse, to hazardous materials, to acts of terrorism, it is critical that we take key steps to protecting our own," states Fire Service Program Director David Hedrick. "For only by protecting the responder first will they be able to perform their full duties of protecting the lives and property of those they are sworn to serve."

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